

Willapa Hills Audubon Society

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Bob Zeigler

SEPA Responsible Official

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Habitat Program

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

600 Capitol Way North

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Mr Zeigler,

Willapa Hills Audubon has had an ongoing relationship with state, fed and county officials over the years in an effort to maintain and improve the numbers of snowy plovers in the several known nesting sites in Pacific County. Volunteers helped count birds and nest sites, worked to make the nest sites viable by pulling the non-native grasses and in monitoring eggs and hatchlings. Even with the use of protective devices and every method possible to insure the survival of hatchlings, we must note that survival into adulthood has been virtually nill. Predation by corvids has been a major part of the reason for this fact. Therefore, if the SNPL is to survive as a species along the WA coast we reluctantly agree with the proposal put forward by biologist Hoenes, that the removal of predators, including corvids, by lethal means may be necessary.

Our one caveat is that it is our opinion that further measures need to be taken to reduce human contact with SNPL nest sites during nesting season; and strongly recommend intervention of some sort (volunteer "protectors" at nesting sites for instance) especially during the clam openings that occur at Leadbetter, and closing off vehicle traffic near the nesting sites even during the infrequent clam dig openings. At this juncture we believe all means should be employed to protect the nesting sites from human encroachment, particularly with the knowledge that corvid activity is increased when humans are present.

Thank you for allowing our comment—we will appreciate any response.

Sincerely,

Steve Puddicombe

Co-chair, Conservation Committee

WHAS